

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07  
NSAE-00 H-01 DHA-02 /028 W  
-----030737 128281 /11

R 021600Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
TO SECSTATE WASHC 4227  
USIA WASHDC  
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST  
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
AMEMBASSY SOFIA  
AMEMBASSY WARSAW  
USMISSION USBERLIN UNN  
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 5411

E.O.11652: GDS  
TAGS: SPON, PFOR, GE, CZ, PINS  
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE ON DETENTION OF NBC CORRESPONDENT

REF: STATE 042045, BERLIN 5278( NOTAL)

1. DURING CALL ON MFA DEPUTY PRESS CHIEF SIEGFRIED RIECHEL TO  
EXPRESS APPRECIATION HIS COOPERATION IN ASSISTING  
US TELEVISION TEAMS WHICH DESCENDED ON EMBASSY FOR CHANCERY  
OPENING, PAO RAISED WORKING CONDITIONS OF JOURNALISTS IN  
GENERAL, AND FOCUSED ON DETENTION OF NBC CORRESPONDENT  
LESLIE COLLITT IN DRESDEN FEBRUARY 3. ( AS DEPARTMENT  
AWARE, OWING TO INEXPLICABLE DELAY IN TRANSMISSION  
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EMBASSY CABLE, REFTTEL INSTRUCTING EMBASSY MAKE DEMARCHE  
RECEIVED ONLY FEBRUARY 25.)

2. PAO REVIEWED EVENTS OF COLLITT DETENTION OF ACTION BY  
CZECH OFFICIALS, AND OF EVENTUAL CONFISCATION OF JOURNALISTS'S  
NOTES AND TAPES -- ALL ON GDR TERRITORY AND IN FULL VIEW AND  
OBVIOUS APPROVAL GDR OFFICIAL. PAO EMPHASIZED ACTION

REPRESENTED FIRST SUCH PROBLEM IN GDR INVOLVING US JOURNALIST AND WAS INCONCISTENT WITH GENERALLY RECOGNIZED RIGHTS OF JOURNALISTS AND WITH PRINCIPLES OF HELSINKI DECLARATION , WHICH GDR OFFICIALS REPEATEDLY CITE. CONSEQUENTLY, PAO WISHES EXPRESS CONCERN OF USG AND DEEP DISAPPOINTMENT THAT PROBLEMS WHICH AROSE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA SHOULD REACH CULMINATION IN GDR. PRESENTATION WAS CONCLUDED WITH ANNOUNCEMENT THAT EMBASSY PRAGUE HAD OFFICIALLY PROTESTED TO GOC.

3. REICHEL, VISIBLY SUPRRISED BY SUBSTANCE OF DEMARCHE, WHICH WAS DELIVERED IN ALMOST SAME CONGENIAL MANNER AS EARLIER EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE, RESPONDED AT FIRST BY ASKING WHETHER PRESENTATION CONSTITUTED OFFICIAL PROTEST. PAO REPLIED THAT AS STATED, USG WISHED PROTECT RIGHTS OF AMERICAN JOURNALISTS, AND THAT SINCE DETENTION OF COLLITT AND IMPOUNDMENT HIS TAPES AND NOTES HAD TAKEN PLACE IN DRESDEN, USG WISHED EXPRESS ITS CONCERN TO GDR, AND REICHEL COULD GIVE PRESENTATION ANY CHARACTERIZATION HE WISHED.

4. REICHEL SAID HE NOT FAMILIAR WITH ALL FACTS OF CASE BUT THAT ACCORDING TO HIS INFORMATION COLLITT HAD VIOLATED CZECHOSLOVAK LAW, THEREFORE " I CANNOT ACCEPT YOUR PROTEST" (THEREBY IDENTIFYING IT AS SUCH). HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT IT WAS TRUE THERE HAD NOT BEEN ANY PROBLEMS "OF THIS NATURE" WITH US JOURNALISTS, OR WITH COLLITT, WHOM HE KNOWS, AND THEN DROPPED THE SUBJECT, AS THE MORE GENERAL MATTER OF ACCREDITATION WAS BROACHED.  
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5. COMMENT: REICHEL FLUSHED WHEN COLLITT CASE WAS BROUGHT UP, OBVIOUSLY UNPREPARED FOR ANYTHING BUT PLEASANTRIES AND COMPLIMENTS. ATMOSPHERE TENSED UP FOR FEW MOMENTS AS HE NERVOUSLY ATTEMPTED RESPOND. HOWEVER, OUR POINTS WERE CAREFULLY REGISTERED, AND IT IS DOUBTFUL MATTER WILL BE PURSUED, AND IN FACT, HE WAS CLEARLY RELIEVED WHEN APO RETURNED TO QUESTION OF ACCREDITATION. END COMMENT.

6. REICHEL REITERATED EARLIER KNOWN STAND OF NON-ACCREDITATION BONN AND BERLIN-BASED US AND WESTERN JOURNALISTS, ON GROUNDS THAT " THEY TOO INDOCTRINATED WITH FRG PROPAGANDA AGAINST GDR." HE SAID THAT ACCREDITATION AS GDR DESIRED WAS PROGRESSING AND WHEN ASKED TO ELABORATE, IDENTIFIED AP, AFP, ITALIAN NEWS AGENCY AND CPUSA'S DAILY WORLD AS HAVING FULL ACCREDITATION, WITH ONE YEAR, MULTI-ENTRY VISAS. CONCERNING PENDING ACCREDITATION OF UPI VIENNA-BASED CORRESPONDENT, HE SAID HE THOUGHT IT WAS BEING PROCESSED. REICHEL CLAIMED THAT GDR WAS MORE GENEROUS THAN USG,

POINTING OUT THAT GDR CORRESPONDENTS IN US HAD SINGLE ENTRY VISAS WHICH HAD TO BE RENEWED EVERY THREE MONTHS. PAO COMPARED TERRITORY OF GDR AND US AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEWS COVERAGE, ASKED HOW OFTEN GDR JOURNALISTS NEEDED TRAVEL CANADA OR MEXICO, AND WONDERED WHETHER REICHEL COULD IN TRUTH CLAIM COMPARABILITY, WHEREUPON SUBJECT DROPPED.

7. CONCLUDING, PAO ASKED WHETHER NEW ARD CORRESPONDENT COMING SOON, AND REICHEL SAID HE HAD HEARD SO, AND IT WOULD BE REPORTER PRESENTLY BASED MOSCOW. PAO SAID DURING HOME LEAVE HE HAD BEEN SURPRISED TO READ IN " NEW YORK TIMES" THAT ARD'S LOTHAR LOEWE HAD BEEN EXPELLED IN LATE DECEMBER, WHEN IT WAS KNOWN THAT LOEWE'S VISA WOULD EXPIRE AT END OF YEAR. IN TERMS OF GDR'S IMAGE, WHY COULD NOT THE MATTER SIMPLY WAIT ONE MORE WEEK FOR A LESS FLAGRANT SOLUTION? REICHEL LEANED FORWARD DRAMATICALLY AND SAID "" FOR THE SIMPLE REASON, WHICH YOU CANNOT KNOW, THAT LOEWE'S  
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ACTIVITIES IN THE GDR WERE VERY CLOSE TO ESPIONAGE."  
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## Message Attributes

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